

SOLACE



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF NIGERIAN SOCIETY OF SUBSTANCE USE
PREVENTION AND TREATMENT PROFESSIONALS

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Editorial Team

Bawo O. James, Publicity Secretary/Mobilization
Mr. Chris Ibe, Asst. Publicity Secretary/Mobilization
Mr. Ejikeme M. Ogueji, Public Relation Officer,
Kaduna State Branch

On the 8th of March, 2022, the United Nations International Women's Day (IWD) was observed and the theme for this year is "Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow".



Prof. Bola Ola, State Coordinator

W o m e n ' s
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of the global challenges of the twenty-first century.

Nigeria as a nation is plagued by an epidemic of substance abuse. The drug statistics in Nigeria is quite overwhelming and the challenge for a sustainable future appears more daunting. Women's involvement in drug demand reduction plays a winning role in curbing the drug epidemic; the actions and contribution from women and girls in response to the drug problem in Nigeria, continue to shape our lives positively for a sustainable future.

This year's IWD observance by ISSUP Lagos Branch was in recognition and celebration of women and girls who are leading the charge on environmental change in the state. Thus, a One Day Training for Female Teachers, Counselors and School Social Workers in Education District VI, Oshodi Lagos was

organized in Ikeja Grammar School on the 27th of March 2022.

The training was on prevention and early detection of substance use by students in Primary and Secondary schools in the state. The objectives of the training equipped the said cohorts in the teaching profession and school environment on quality and evidence based responses to drug related issues in schools.

The training tilted "Drug Use Prevention Education and Intervention," was facilitated by Dr. Oluseyi Odewale, a Universal Prevention Curriculum (UPC) national trainer and Mrs. Maria Ilugbuhi, a drug demand reduction global trainer.

The Tutor General & Permanent Secretary of Education District VI was represented by the Head of Guidance and Counseling Unit of the District; in the person of Mrs. A. O. Bola-Lawal, also in attendance was Mrs. Funmi Fijabi, a guidance and counseling officer from the District. The President of ISSUP Nigeria Chapter, Dr. Martin O. Agwogie was represented by Dr. Isaac Olatunde while the Coordinator of ISSUP Lagos Branch, Prof. Bola Ola was represented by Mrs. Titilope M. Ogunluyi.

The participants were taken on drugs and its effects,



Dr. Oluseyi Odewale Facilitating at the Training

types of drug use and risk factors for drug use by Mrs. Ilugbui. There was an expose on the numerous factors leading children to use substances, which include biological and environmental risk factors.

Dr. Odewale took the participants through the components of prevention and school-based interventions for all age categories in addition to policies for positive results in preventing drug use for all age categories according to UNODC/WHO International Standards on Drug Use Prevention. The training was concluded by highlighting different steps involved in the prevention of substance use and substance use disorder among students.

On behalf of the president of ISSUP Nigeria chapter, Dr. Isaac Olatunde, a UPC National Trainer, expressed concern on the alarming rate of substance use by both primary and secondary school pupils.

He shared that young people between ages 10 to 18 are commonly exposed to the use and abuse of substances. According to science this is not healthy for them and could affect their central nervous system, their behaviour, and mood. Substance use and abuse are ravishing young persons in Nigeria, it is against this backdrop that the training was organized for teachers, counselors, and school social workers.

The Lagos State Branch Chairperson for Strategic Committee & Financial Secretary and representative of the State Coordinator, Mrs. Ogunluyi, disclosed that it was the first training of its kind organized by the Lagos State Branch of ISSUP Nigeria Chapter and explained that the training was organized with

the objectives to address the vulnerability of students to substance use and to commemorate the 2022 International Women's Day.

She expressed that there is a need for collective effort in tackling the drug epidemic in our communities and stated that the responsibility of raising quality students and shaping their characters rest on the



The Female Participants at the Training

shoulders of counselors and teachers, the majority of whom she said were females.

Mrs. Ogunluyi went further to say that ISSUP Lagos Branch is at the vanguard of substance use prevention initiatives through capacity building. She affirmed in her closing remarks at the event that “This is the first time ISSUP Lagos Branch is organizing this training and we hope to carry out similar ones across other districts in Lagos that will involve male teachers”.

The school counselor of Ijeshatedo Senior Grammar School, Okota & Team lead for comprehensive school, Mrs Onyilola Omolara, who spoke on behalf of the participants, praised ISSUP Lagos Branch for organizing the training which she described as a right step in the right direction towards addressing the menace of drugs among secondary school students.

She noted that drug abuse is a disturbing social

menace that must be checked and condemned the role some parents and community leaders play by enabling substance use through lack of parental control, negligence and the availability & accessibility of substances in the community; adding that the training has improved teachers' and counselors' level of awareness on drug use.

She concluded with the promise that the teachers, counselors, and school social workers will take the campaign back to their respective schools and publicize the information to other teachers, with a view to raising students that would be good ambassadors in future.

Finally, Ms. Bekederemo Angela, the General Secretary of ISSUP Lagos Branch encouraged the participants to take charge of their school environments and ensure that school premises are rid of all forms of psychoactive substances. She encouraged the teachers to go back and facilitate collaborations between school authorities, community leaders and parents to ensure that school premises, the community and families are safe and healthy for the children.



ISSUP Nigeria Chapter, Lagos Branch



Isaac Olatunde, with Members of the Strategic Community



Mrs. Maria Ilugbuh, Dr. Oluseyi Odewale, Dr. Isaac Olatunde, and Mrs. Titi Ogunluyi, Chairperson SCM and other ISSUP Members.



Mrs. Oluwaranti E. Sanni, ISSUP Lagos Branch Public Relation Officer and Mrs. Margaret Chibututu



ISSUP Lagos State Branch



Mr. Ejikeme M. Ogueji
*Public Relations Officer, ISSUP Kaduna State Branch
and a member of the Editorial Team of ISSUP Nigeria Chapter*

It is often said that one's network is his net worth and in Nigerian parlance there's a common saying “no be wetin you know but who you know.” This expression which literally means “not what you know but who you know” may not be popular but it is vitally important because it is not really about how talented you are but about how strong your network is and how much you can utilize it. Whether you're a teacher, psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, law enforcement or counsellor etc., nurturing a network of colleagues can open doors at any stage of your career. Effective networking has the basis of support and trust and can mean the difference between a mediocre career and a remarkable career depending on the kind of people you put within your circle. There are two major types of networks, namely;

The Social Network: This consist of your personal

network of contacts made informally through social, religious or non-business activities. These contacts may comprise of family, friends, friends of friends or community members at your church/mosque or in various social clubs, etc.

The Professional Network: This has to do with any contact leveraged for employment, career growth or professional reasons. Contacts made through professional activities including colleagues, field practitioners and service providers met at networking events, professional associations, or skills-based volunteering.

Networking for drug demand reduction professionals is about building and sustaining relationships with people—those who contribute to your professional growth and those with whom you can work to contribute to the field.

The field of substance use prevention and treatment is evolving in Nigeria and one unique feature of the practice is the professional working within a team to achieve defined goals. Teams involve multi-disciplinary professionals working in prevention, treatment, and recovery. Hence, building professional networks is one of the best ways for professionals in the field to set themselves up for success.

Learning more about other colleagues ultimately makes you a better practitioner and/or service provider. The perspectives of others can strengthen your work, and your professional relationships have the potential to create partnerships for the future. At the same time, your work, background, and perspective have much to offer your colleagues in the field.

When it comes to professional growth and advancement, networking tends to be one of the major driving factors. It helps to build connections with other professionals who can help you reach new clients in a highly effective way. Networking allows you to create a referral channel with other practitioners and service providers who might refer clients, educational and/or job opportunities to you, or mention your name, the name of your organisation or the services you provide in some positive way to the people they know.

As part of creating opportunities for yourself as an individual and other professionals in the field, it is good to understand the benefits and why it is important to build networks.

BENEFITS OF NETWORKING

It strengthens career connections

Networking is about sharing and forming trust and helping one another towards achieving goals, regularly engaging with your contacts and finding opportunities to assist them helps strengthen the relationship and by this you sow the seed of reciprocal assistance when you need help to achieve your goals.

Through networking you also get opportunity to get fresh and rich ideas. Your network can be an excellent source of new perspective and ideas to help you in your role, exchanging information on the challenges, experiences and goals is a key benefit of networking because it allows you to gain new insight that you may not have otherwise thought of. Far from being a nuisance most people like

being asked to help; it's flattering and makes them useful. If you're struggling with a decision, challenge or new direction, calling up a colleague, mentor, or friend can be beneficial to both of you as they will in turn think of you when next they have a challenge.

It helps you to raise your profile

Being visible and getting noticed is a benefit of networking that is essential for career building. Regular attendance to professional events will help to make your face known. Raising your profile within your professional circle will help you to stand out to recruiters who are always on the lookout for strong talents and partners who may more likely approach you with offers.

It helps you get access to opportunities

Expanding your contacts can open doors to new opportunities, career advancement, personal growth or simply new knowledge. Active networking helps to keep you top of mind when openings such as job opportunities, trainings, research grants etc. arise and increases your likelihood to receive an introduction to



potential and relevant people or even referrals for new clients. So as your career advances, so also being a recognised part of a network is a key way to be in access to opportunities you may hitherto not know about.

Helps you to gain more knowledge

It is a great opportunity to exchange best practice knowledge, learn about success techniques of your peers and stay abreast of the latest field development. A wide network of informed interconnected contacts means broader access to new and valuable knowledge.

Offers career progression and development

It's a good idea to constantly ask your contacts about developments and techniques and keep an eye on all kinds of articles that contacts share on professional platforms and social media e.g. Whatsapp groups, LinkedIn etc. and don't forget to comment let them know that you appreciate the piece. And don't trash insights of people from other fields as they may be able to offer new angles you might not have

previously considered.

Helps you to get career advice and support.

Gaining the advice of experienced peers is one of the benefits of networking. Discussing common opportunities and challenges opens the door to a lot of valuable suggestions and guidance. So offering strong assistance to your contacts also sets a strong foundation for receiving support in return when you need it. When you're part of a network, it's always good to be open to share information and knowledge because then others will reciprocate when you need it.

Helps you build confidence

By continually putting yourself out there and meeting new people, you're effectively stepping outside your comfort zone and building invaluable social skill and self-confidence that you can take with you anywhere. The more networks, the more you grow and learn how to make lasting connections, building your confidence overtime, you'll get to know different characters and new social skills to keep growing and your ability to handle different people and in different situations.



Helps you to get different perspectives

It is easier to get caught up in the routine of your professional realm that you'll end up in a box. By talking to others in other fields, you can get insight that ordinarily come from viewing situations with fresh perspectives. Asking for opinions from your contacts that you trust or respect can help you see

things in a new light that can help you overcome roadblocks that you might not have known how to circumvent during the course of your career.

Helps you to develop long lasting personal relationships

Some of the strongest and long-lasting friendships are borne from work connections. Contacts you have in your network are probably like-minded people with similar goals as your own, so it's not unlikely that professional relationship will spill over into personal relationship and friendship, and this becomes a lifelong relationship. Contacts from your networks can turn into your mentors, can become your support system, they can also be your reference point when you're looking for job and other career opportunities etc.

Helps you get answer to professional enquiries

As long as you have a strong network you can be confident that someone within your sphere can answer even your toughest questions. Networking with other professionals will enable you to continue to learn. Learning from different individuals can urge you to learn new knowledge and stay connected with the evolving concepts and developments pertaining to your field.

HOW TO BUILD GOOD NETWORK?

Networking is not just about handing out and collecting business cards and phone numbers, it goes beyond that. It's all about Connecting, establishing and building relationships that have mutual benefits



for you and others. There are no hard and fast rules on networking, but the following tips are vital for effective networking:

JOIN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Maintaining a professional membership and actively participating in association activities is a great way for practitioners and service providers in drug demand reduction space to learn from the experiences of colleagues and keep current on the developments in the field. It also provides an excellent opportunity to become noticed and increases the chances of connecting with people who can provide the right advice and endorsements at key points in your career.

ATTEND EVENTS

Among the benefits of a professional organization membership are invitations to various conferences, workshops, seminars, and virtual events. Events like these offer the opportunity to mingle with a wide range of peers, which can be a powerful networking tool. When you attend events check the agendas for speakers or topics that may intrigue you. Also, look

outside your primary specialty to expand your perspective. Once you're there, introduce yourself to as many new people as possible. If you make a connection, be sure to get their contact information for later follow-up. Another great way to keep up the contacts you have made is by connecting on social media. Keep your LinkedIn profile up to date, complete with a professional photograph, and optimize your page with keywords relevant to your field. That way, when potential employers, researchers, grantors, partners search for professionals with your skillset, you will show up on their list.

MAKE THE MOST OF INFORMAL OPPORTUNITIES

Social media and formal occasions such as conferences and seminars are not the only way to meet influential people in your field. Informal get-togethers, such as weddings, award ceremonies, and community events will also put you in touch with people who may be significant connections in the future.

When you meet someone you'd like to stay in touch with, always follow up. A quick email or text message is an easy way to send a note saying it was a pleasure to meet them. Try to mention one idea they shared that was especially interesting. Also invite them to reach out to you if you can help them in any way. Networking should be two-way street.

VOLUNTEER

Some community events and professional associations may offer volunteer opportunities, so consider offering your expertise. Not only can

volunteering provide you with new experiences and introduce you to new people, it also enhances your reputation and gives you the chance for personal and career fulfillment. Even if you don't have a lot of time to spare, a little goes a long way.

WORK LOCUM TENENS ON THE SIDE

Another excellent way to make an impression is through locum tenens work. Using, say, holiday weekends or available vacation time to accept a locum tenens assignment on the side allows you to step in at different practice settings in different locations or organisations, which increases your exposure exponentially. Once you're on a job, you get to work alongside new colleagues, which is a great way to grow your professional network. Plus, you have the opportunity to experience practicing in a new environment and learn new methods of providing care and services.

There are numerous ways to network with other professional in the field e.g., via email, at conferences, or through mutual connections. It is important to identify your needs and set goals for what you hope to get out of and give to a networking relationship. Even when networking opportunities arise spontaneously, having a plan in place will help you get the most out of those interactions. Whichever networking strategies you choose, the benefits are likely far-reaching and long-lasting. Remember that you get what you give, so get out there, stay involved, be open to new experiences, and prepare to reap the benefits of smart professional networking.

In continuation of ISSUP Nigeria Chapter bi-monthly webinar, two webinars were hosted, January 27th and April 12th, 2022, with Dr. Akanidomo K J Ibanga and Dr. Ann Ukachi Madukwe as speakers respectively.



Dr. Akanidomo K J Ibanga

Topic: UNODC Innovative Approaches to Drug Demand Reduction in Nigeria following COVID-19 Pandemic

Highlights from the session

- Innovative approaches to drug demand reduction following COVID-19 pandemic
- Challenges in developing innovative approaches to drug demand reduction in Nigeria
- Lesson learned from the innovative approaches
- Sustaining the innovative approaches and way forward

Topic: Harm Reduction: Concept and Applications in Nigeria

Highlights from the session

- harm reduction as a component of drug demand reduction
- the various harm reduction strategies and their application
- harm reduction practices in Nigeria and the way forward



Dr. Ann Ukachi Madukwe

APPOINTMENT

The International Substance Abuse and Addiction Coalition (ISAAC), United Kingdom has appointed Amb. Christogonus C. Ibekwe, Executive Director/Founder, African Youths Initiative on Crime Prevention and Assistant Publicity Secretary ISSUP Nigeria as the West African Regional Coordinator. Another responsibility and opportunity to do more towards addressing the menace of substance abuse and addiction amongst young people within the West Africa Sub Region. Appreciation to ISAAC Secretary General and the African Continental Director for this worthy appointment.



ISSUP NIGERIA NEWS

1. ISSUP Nigeria Chapter joined the rest of the world to commemorate the 2022 International Women's Day
2. Amb. Christogonus C. Ibe, Executive Director/Founder, African Youths Initiative on Crime Prevention and Assistant Publicity Secretary ISSUP Nigeria was appointed as the West African Regional Coordinator of the International Substance Abuse and Addiction Coalition (ISAAC)

UPCOMING EVENTS/TRAININGS AND CONFERENCES

1. ISSUP Global Conference/Trainings, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates,
Date: May 12th to 16th, 2022
2. GISA/Colombo Plan UPC Family-Track Virtual Training
Date: 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 11th and 12th of June 2022
For participation call 0705 348 6054 or visit www.gisainitiative.org to register.
3. GISA/Colombo Plan UPC Core Virtual Training
Date: 14th, 15th, 16th, 22nd, and 23rd July 2022
For participation call 0705 348 6054 or visit www.gisainitiative.org to register.
4. Quintessential Healthcare Centre/Colombo Plan UTC and UPC trainings, May, June and July 2022
For participation call +234 805 3152 or +234 8130291664.
5. Federal Neuropsychiatric Hospital Yaba/Colombo Plan UTC 1, 2, 6, 7 & 8 in person trainings
Date: August 15th to 20th, 2022
For participation, call 08039376789.

ISSUP Nigeria Chapter

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New members are welcome

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+234 706 221 9274

+234 812 937 8557

Or send mail to: ISSUPNigeria@gmail.com